GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:851
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2003
DECLINING INVESTMENT IN IRRIGATION SCHEMES
MAHBOOB ZAHEDI

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether investment in irrigational schemes has declined in 2002, as compared to previous years;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government have initiated remedial steps in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether due to critical deficit of funds 159 big and 242 medium irrigation projects could not be completed during the Ninth Plan and would now be completed in the Tenth Plan; and

(f) if so, the details thereof alongwith the measures taken by the Union Government to ensure that projects are completed in the scheduled time frame?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) & (b) Irrigation being a State subject, all types of irrigation, flood control and drainage schemes are planned, executed, and maintained by the State Governments themselves from their plan funds and as per their own priorities. The year-wise share of irrigation and flood control in the total plan outlay of States for 2002-2003 and some previous year is as under:

Year	Percentage of Outlay for Irrigation & Flood Control to total outlay
2002-03	15.91
2001-02	16.09
2000-01	17.44
1999-00	18.90

(c) & (d) The Tenth Plan document has strongly pleaded for progressively stepping up investments in this sector from the Tenth Plan onwards keeping in view that provision of irrigation is the best bet for poverty alleviation. The revised National Water Policy 2002 has stressed that inadequate funding of projects should be obviated by an optimal allocation of resources on the basis of prioritization having regard to an early completion of ongoing project. In order to supplement plan funding for the irrigation sector the ongoing Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) in operation since 1996-97 provides Central Loan Assistance (CLA) to the States towards expeditious completion of major/medium irrigation projects. The programme has undergone reformative changes in the funding pattern since 2002-03. The programme has special dispensation of 100% loan assistance for Fast Track Projects and relaxed lending norms for reforming states. During the Ninth Plan an amount of Rs.8480 crore was released to states under the programme for about 150 major and medium projects.

(e) & (f) Early Completion of about 400 ongoing irrigation projects depends on the State Governments providing adequate outlays to complete the projects in the Tenth Plan Period. 159 major and 242 medium irrigation projects could not be completed during the Ninth Plan due to varied reasons including constraint of resources with the states and would spill over to the Tenth Plan. The State Governments are likely to start 67 major and 130 medium projects as new schemes during the Tenth Plan. As a result, due to thin spreading of resources, it is unlikely that all the spillover projects would be completed by the States during the Tenth Plan. As per assessment made by the Working Group set up for the major and medium irrigation programme for the Tenth Five Year Plan, Rs. 77100 crore is estimated to be required during the Tenth Plan for completing 103 major and 240 medium projects.

The measures taken by the Union Government for speedy completion of projects include:

(i) Providing financial loan assistance to states under AIBP including Fast Track Projects;

(ii) Encouraging the states to revise old water rates to recover O&M costs so that plan outlay for completing projects is not eaten up by O&M expenses;

(iii) The Tenth Plan adopted by the Union Government has laid thrust on completion of ongoing projects rather than taking up new projects to avoid thin spreading of resources.